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News Releases and other News Material

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USDA Statement-

Release No. 0348.94
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

Concerning the Fifth Round of the Australia/U.S. Bilateral Trade Consultations April 28, 1994

The fifth round of the Australia/U.S. Bilateral Agricultural Trade consultations took place in Canberra on April 27, 1994. These talks illustrate the joint commitment of both Governments to consult regularly on trade and economic issues relating to the bilateral relationship.

The Australian side was led by Mr. David Hawes, Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the U.S. delegation by Mr. Joe O'Mara, Counsel to Agriculture Secretary Espy on international agricultural issues.

Mr. O'Mara had separate meetings with the Australian Minister for Trade, Senator McMullan, and the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, Senator Collins.

A separate meeting between the U.S. delegation and representatives of key Australian agricultural industry groups is being held on April 28, 1994.

Building on the already high level of dialogue that has taken place between the two countries on bilateral and multilateral issues, the talks looked at the potential for further cooperation in the transition to the post Uruguay Round era. This will include continued cooperation to open third country markets for agricultural exports.

The United States and Australia remain committed to the future liberalization of agricultural trade commenced by the Uruguay Round processes. The U.S. delegation expressed a desire to consult closely with Australia and the Cairns Group on approaches to the establishment of the Committee on Agriculture in the new World Trade Organization.

There was also ready agreement to continue close consultation on farm policy issues, in both countries, including Australian concerns on dairy, sugar, cotton and beef and U.S. concerns regarding poultry, pork and horticultural products.

The talks also covered a range of bilateral access issues and Australia's ongoing concerns over the operation of the Export Enhancement Program (EEP) and the Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP).

Mr. O'Mara said that, while EEP would remain an important part of U.S. trade policy, the U.S. stood by assurances on the management of EEP previously given to Australia, including by President Clinton to Prime Minister Keating in September 1993.

Mr. O'Mara also confirmed it was not the intention of the U.S. to introduce new trade distorting measures in contravention of the Uruguay Round outcome.

The maintenance of a close dialogue on agricultural issues between Australia and the US is useful to both Governments and these consultations provide an effective forum for detailed discussions on areas of cooperation and on matters of concern to both countries. Such consultation is important in maintaining the strength and vitality of our bilateral relationship.

A further round of consultations will take place later this year in Washington, D.C.



News Releases-

Release No. 0333.94

Jan Suszkiw (301) 344-2173

Maria Bynum (202) 720-5192

USDA-INVENTED "BAIT TUBE" WILL TAKE ON ALL BOLL WEEVILS IN MISS. COUNTY

WASHINGTON, April 25--This summer in Noxubee County, Miss., a new "bait tube" invented by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists--and now on the market--gets its largest test to date.

"Weevils are lured to a thin insecticide coating on the tube by a synthetic version of the pest's own sex attractant, or pheromone," said entomologist Gerald H. McKibben at USDA's Agricultural Research Service. He and colleagues at the ARS Boll Weevil Research Unit, Starkville, Miss., invented the bait-tube technology.

In May, Starkville scientists and about 20 cotton growers will begin the tube's biggest test: to see if it can replace insecticide sprays to control weevils on all 8,000 cotton acres in Noxubee County, about 100 miles northeast of Jackson, Miss.

"If it succeeds, Noxubee County could serve as a model for using the tubes in weevil eradication or control programs in other cotton-growing regions," McKibben said.

A bait tube uses only five to ten percent as much insecticide as typical sprays, McKibben noted. Typically spaced 100 feet apart around a field's perimeter, the tubes lie in wait for weevils. By contrast, sprays cover an entire field.

Each year, the black, long-snouted weevils cost the U.S. cotton industry \$300 million. Much of that cost is in chemical controls.

"The tubes don't attract beneficial insects and are a safe alternative to spraying, especially near townships or environmentally sensitive areas such as lakes, parks and wildlife refuges," McKibben said in a story about the bait tube and other new anti-weevil tactics in the March issue of "Agricultural Research" magazine.

Noxubee is ideal for the new study, McKibben said. Its cotton acreage is somewhat isolated from other cotton-growing areas, so there's little migration of weevils in and out of the county during the season. That will help scientists get more precise data on the tubes' effectiveness.

McKibben said the Noxubee test is part of ongoing cooperative research by ARS, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Southeastern Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation and other collaborators to integrate the tubes into eradication or control programs planned for Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and other states in the Cotton Belt.

ARS licensed the bait-tube technology to a Houston firm, Plato Industries Inc., which commercially developed it under a cooperative R&D agreement with the research agency. Plato markets the tubes under the name "Boll Weevil Attract and Control Tubes" (BWACTION). Last fall, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved their use in commercial cotton.

According to Thomas A. Plato, the firm's president, the tubes reduced spring emergence of weevils by more than 90 percent in field tests in eight states. Plato ran its tests in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee in 1992 and 1993.

McKibben said one patent is pending and another has recently been granted for the bait tube and its components.

Other environment-friendly anti-boll weevil tactics emerging from the Starkville lab and ARS' Subtropical Agricultural Research Laboratory in Weslaco, Texas, include:

- Tiny Mexican wasps that may be the first effective insect parasite for the boll weevil.
- A natural fungus that kills weevils within a couple of days and is also being commercialized.
- Farm techniques that deny the weevil a cozy shelter over winter.
- Efforts to turn the weevil's neurological machinery against it.
- Computer and satellite monitoring to track the weevil's numbers.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Contact for details Gerald H. McKibben, entomologist, Boll Weevil Research Unit, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Mississippi State, Miss., 39762. Telephone (601) 323-2230.

For b/w photographs contact the Photography Division, Room 4404-S, Office of Public Affairs, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300, phone (202) 720-6633.

For color transparencies contact Anita Daniels, Photo Unit, USDA-ARS Information Staff, 6303 Ivy Lane, Rm. 454, Greenbelt, Md., 20770. Telephone (301) 344-2956.

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Release No. 0334.94

Alicia L. Ford (202) 720-8998

Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959

USDA PROTECTS 5 NEW PLANT VARIETIES

WASHINGTON, April 25 --The U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued certificates of protection to developers of five new varieties of seed-reproduced plants including corn, lespedeza and pepper.

Kenneth H. Evans, an official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service in Washington, D.C., said developers of the new varieties will have the exclusive right to reproduce, sell, import and export their products in the United States for 18 years. Certificates of protection are granted after a review of the breeders' records and claims that each new variety is novel, uniform and stable.

The following varieties have been issued certificates of protection:

--the PHHB9, PHN41 and PHRE1 varieties of corn, developed by Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc., Johnston, Iowa;

--the Marion variety of lespedeza, developed by the Curators of the University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.; and

--the Davie Peach variety of pepper, developed by Must Sell Inc., Davie, Fla.

The certificate of protection for the Marion lespedeza variety is being issued for sale by variety name only as a class of certified seed and to conform to the number of generations specified by the owner.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service administers the plant variety protection program which provides marketing protection to developers of new and distinctive seed-reproduced plants ranging from farm crops to flowers.

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Release No. 0335.94

Alicia L. Ford (202) 720-8998

Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959

USDA PROTECTS 15 NEW PLANT VARIETIES

WASHINGTON, April 25 --The U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued certificates of protection to developers of 15 new plant varieties of seed-reproduced plants including bean, cauliflower, corn, cotton and rape.

Kenneth H. Evans, an official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service in Washington, D.C., said developers of the new varieties will have the exclusive right to reproduce, sell, import and export their products in the United States for 18 years. Certificates of protection are granted after a review of the breeders' records and claims that each new variety is novel, uniform and stable.

The following varieties have been issued certificates of protection:

--the Camelot variety of bean, developed by the Rogers NK Seed Co., Boise, Idaho;

--the Campoverde variety of cauliflower, developed by Rijk Zwaan Zaadteelt en Zaadhandel B.V. and Meo Voto Beheer B.V., De Lier, The Netherlands;

--the MBWZ, AQA3, 91IFC2, 2FADB, MM501D, 3IJI1, 3IIH6 and 2MCDB varieties of corn, developed by DeKalb Plant Genetics, DeKalb, Ill.;
--the PHAW6 variety of corn, developed by Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc., Johnston, Iowa;
--the All-Tex Max-9 and All-Tex Excess varieties of cotton, developed by Levelland Delinting Inc., Levelland, Texas; and
--the Ceres variety of rape, developed by Calgene Inc. and King Grain Inc., Davis, Calif., and Blissfield, Mich.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service administers the plant variety protection program which provides marketing protection to developers of new and distinctive seed-reproduced plants ranging from farm crops to flowers.



Release No. 0336.94
Laura Trivers (202) 720-7711
Johna Pierce (202) 720-1691

CONCERN ABOUT HUNGER IN AMERICA BRINGS 250 PEOPLE TO USDA FORUM

WASHINGTON, April 25 -- Solutions to the problem of hunger in our communities was the focus of a USDA Regional Hunger Forum Friday in Dayton, Ohio. Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services Ellen Haas presided over the hearing with Rep. Tony Hall, D-OH, a congressional leader in the fight against hunger.

Haas said, "Hunger will not be tolerated. We all want the same thing. We want our programs to reach those who need them and provide them with access to a healthful, nutritious diet."

Hall told the audience of 250 advocates, program participants, academics, producers, and industry representatives that "we should not underestimate the importance of today's and other day's forums. It is at these events that America's leaders will be making rational decisions about what new directions to take."

"Hunger falls hardest on our youngest citizens, our children," Haas said. "As part of our School Meals Initiative for Healthy Kids, we are committed to increasing not only access to the calories and nutrients that children need to grow, but also increasing access to the nutritious diets that children need to be healthy."

Ruanne Wilks, a WIC participant from Richmond, Indiana, urged the Department to carry the nutrition education component of WIC to the school meals program so her children will eat more nutritious, more appetizing school lunches.

Alan Mitchell, a senior at Oberlin High School in Oberlin, Ohio, said, "Every student has a legitimate right not to be hungry." Nutrition should start in school and be something kids can take home with them each day.

Other panelists addressed the importance of empowerment and self-sufficiency for program participants. Eleanor Josaitis, the associate director of Focus: HOPE, a civil and human rights organization in Detroit, said, "We have provided food to many people in 25 years. At the same time, we have worked with the same passion and dedication to provide jobs, training and education so that people may be allowed the dignity to provide for themselves."

Friday's forum in Dayton and the three previous regional forums have continued the dialogue begun in June at the National Hunger Forum in Washington, D.C. where USDA brought together the largest and most distinguished group to talk about the problem of hunger since the White House Conference in 1969. Previous regional forums were held in Burlington, VT; McAllen, TX; and Kansas City, MO.



Release No. 0338.94
Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623
Pamela Finney (202) 205-1584

USDA ANNOUNCES FOREST SERVICE PROPOSED RULES ON RANGELAND REFORM

WASHINGTON, April 25 -- U.S. Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment James R. Lyons today announced information on proposed rules for rangeland management and grazing fees on National Forests and Grasslands throughout the United States.

The proposed rules are designed to provide for healthy and sustainable rangeland ecosystems on lands managed by the Forest Service. The rules include a planning and decision making framework, which will facilitate an ecosystem approach to management. In addition, the new rules propose changes in the way livestock grazing permits are administered.

Grazing fees for National Forests and Grasslands in the west would also change under the proposals. Development of the proposed rules occurred in coordination with the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management.

The Forest Service is proposing two separate rules. One addresses management of rangeland resources on all National Forests and Grasslands. Its intention is to place greater emphasis on stewardship of rangeland resources.

In addition, it clarifies planning and decision making processes and the link between grazing permits and forest land management plans. The proposed rule also improves administration of grazing permits, and provides more consistency between regulations of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

The second proposed rule would change the grazing fee system for western states. It would result in a base fee of \$3.96 per head month by 1997, phased in over 3 years starting in 1995. A head month is the amount of forage needed to sustain one cow and calf, one horse, or five sheep or goats for a period of one month. The National Grasslands, which currently have a different fee than the National Forests, would also be brought into the new system. The third year increase to the \$3.96 fee would not be implemented until a separate regulation is issued establishing the criteria for an incentive based grazing fee which could allow for a thirty percent discount in the grazing fee. USDA will lead an effort in cooperation with the U.S. Department of the Interior to conduct a dialogue on fee incentives to solicit information from as many interested groups as possible in development of the incentive based grazing fee.

"The proposed rules go a long way towards addressing the major issues that surround the management of rangelands on the National Forests and Grasslands," said Lyons. "We have done our best to address the concerns of all who have an interest in public lands grazing. We look forward to public comment and dialogue to enable us to build a broadly supported final product," he said.

"Forest Service management of rangelands face two major issues of increasing concern," said Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas. "The first is a perceived lack of progress in correcting management on those rangelands still under unsatisfactory management. Despite substantial progress made over past decades with ranchers and other partners, in some areas, more work needs to be done. Another issue is concern for reasonable stability for the thousands of family owned ranches, which are dependent on rangelands managed by the Forest Service. The changes we propose address both issues within an ecosystem management context."

Copies of the Forest Service proposed rules will be available at all Forest Service offices. Comment period for the proposed Forest Service rules will run through July 28, 1994. The Department of the Interior is expected to release a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) in May covering both their proposed rules and the rules proposed by USDA. The comment period on the DEIS is expected to run 90 days. Address written comments to:

Rangeland Reform '94
PO Box 66300
Washington, D.C. 20035-6300.

Electronic copies of the proposed rules are also available. Internet access is provided by the ace.esusda.gov gopher and almanac. Bulletin board access is provided by the NAL bbs system FORESTs conference at (301) 504-5111, 504-5496, or 504-5497.



BIOCONTROL THREESOME TACKLES POTATO BEETLES

WASHINGTON, April 26--A trio of environmentally friendly organisms did as well as a chemical insecticide in protecting potato plants from Colorado potato beetles, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist reported.

The Colorado potato beetle is potato's worst insect enemy in the eastern U.S., and also attacks tomato and other crops.

"We recruited a stinkbug, a bacterium and a fungus to kill potato beetles in an experiment last summer and fall in Maine," said entomologist K. Duane Biever of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. "As far as we know, this is the first time this trio of natural biocontrol agents has been tested in a potato field."

Adult Colorado potato beetles look natty but act nasty. Bright yellow with black stripes and dots, they gorge on potato leaves--and cost U.S. potato growers an estimated \$75 to \$100 million a year to control, said Biever. What's more, the beetle has developed strong resistance to conventional insecticides in many areas.

Biever, based at ARS' Fruit and Vegetable Insect Research Unit, Yakima, Wash., cooperated with three University of Maine scientists. The team designed the study, carried out at Presque Isle, Maine, to compare the biological agents and a conventional chemical insecticide.

Potato harvests were about the same, said Biever. The biocontrol plots yielded the equivalent of 15.3 tons per acre; those sprayed with conventional amounts of insecticide yielded about 16 tons per acre. The difference is insignificant, said Biever, because yields commonly vary from one potato plant to the next.

Biever raised more than 100,000 *Perillus bioculatus* stinkbugs for the test. The insects are black and white, or red and black, and have shield-like marks on their backs. "This stinkbug won't harm field or garden plants," he said. "It lives about two months, and eats hundreds of the potato beetle's bright orange eggs, as well as numerous immature beetles that hatch from those eggs."

The bacterium, *Bacillus thuringiensis* or "Bt," is harmless to humans but carries a toxin into the beetle's stomach.

The fungus, *Beauveria bassiana*, penetrates the beetle's cuticle--its "skin"--then kills it by feeding on its innards.

The stinkbug is marketed for home garden use, but isn't sold in the large quantities farmers need, said Biever. The bacterium--but not the fungus--is commercially available in the U.S.

Eleanor Groden, Frank Drummond and Randall Alford of the University of Maine, Orono, conducted the Presque Isle experiment. They used three plots, each two-and-one-half acres, to test the biocontrols and the conventional and reduced amounts of insecticide.

The researchers grew two popular potato varieties--Atlantic and Superior--for the test. They used three applications of Bt in combination with the *Beauveria* fungus. "We know from smaller tests," said Groden, "that Bt likely did the bulk of the initial work, because it acts faster than the fungus. But the fungus sticks around longer."

We hope to repeat the test this summer," she said, "using the stinkbug first and the fungus second. That should exploit their full potential. And, it would allow us to use less Bt. That could delay the beetle's buildup of resistance to this bioinsecticide."

To make the biocontrol strategy more economical, Biever hopes to streamline rearing of the beneficial stinkbugs.

Plus, Groden and colleagues in Maine seek a faster, cheaper way to evenly deploy hungry but tiny stinkbugs--at 5 days old, just one-sixteenth of an inch long--through a potato field.

Currently, to move young stinkbugs from shipping containers, a worker slips a fine-tipped paintbrush under the insect's legs. When the stinkbug grabs hold of brush hairs, the worker gently taps the brush, to drop the bug onto a potato leaf. The stinkbug hurries away, and soon starts looking for beetle snacks.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact K. Duane Biever, research entomologist, Fruit and Vegetable Insect Research Unit, Yakima Agricultural Research Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Yakima, Wash. 98902. Telephone: (509) 575-5963.

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Release No. 0341.94

Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

USDA ANNOUNCES PROGRAM DIFFERENTIALS FOR 1994-CROP COTTON

WASHINGTON, April 26--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today announced the availability of schedules of differentials for the 1994 crops of upland and extra-long-staple (ELS) cotton, the schedules used in making CCC price support loans to producers.

The same procedures used in 1993 were used to develop the 1994 schedules. The schedule of differentials is applicable to CCC price support loan rates of 50.00 cents per pound for the base grade of upland cotton and 85.03 cents per pound for ELS cotton.

Loan rates for the base grade of upland cotton at each approved warehouse location are also available.

Tables of upland and ELS cotton differentials and a schedule of loan rates for individual qualities of 1994 ELS cotton are available from: Cotton, Grains and Rice Price Support Division, Room 3630-S, USDA/ASCS, Box 2405, Washington, D.C. 20013 or by calling Tom Fink (202) 720-8701.

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Release No. 0343.94

Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898

Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959

USDA PROPOSES FINAL INSPECTION OF ANIMALS FOR EXPORT TO MEXICO AND CANADA

WASHINGTON, April 26 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed to require that an Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service veterinarian conduct a final inspection of animals being shipped from the United States by air or sea to Mexico and Canada.

"This final inspection will ensure the health of all animals exported from the United States to Canada and Mexico and maintain the confidence of North American animal health officials," said Donald Luchsinger, acting deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Until recently, most exporters shipping animals to Mexico or Canada have moved the animals by land from the United States. Animals being moved by land are first inspected by an APHIS veterinarian or a USDA-accredited veterinarian at their state of origin. Once the animals arrive at a border station, a Mexican or Canadian veterinarian--not a USDA veterinarian--inspects the animals before they are permitted to enter those countries.

Because of the proximity between the U.S. land border stations and those of Mexico and Canada, any animals found diseased during the importation process could be easily returned with little risk of spreading diseases.

Animals being shipped by air or sea to countries other than Mexico and Canada are required to be inspected by an APHIS veterinarian both before they leave their state of origin and also at a designated port of embarkation with the appropriate export facilities before shipment overseas.

Luchsinger said many exporters now have begun to ship animals by air or sea to Mexico or Canada. These shipments could allow animals to be moved directly into the interior of those nations without a

final veterinary inspection, thus circumventing the inspection system that prevents the exportation of animals that may have been exposed to disease.

This proposed rule would require all animals being exported by air or sea to Mexico or Canada to be inspected by an APHIS or accredited veterinarian in their state of origin and by an APHIS veterinarian at an appropriate export facility at a designated port before shipment to Canada or Mexico.

The exporter would be charged a user fee (\$33.50 an hour per person plus reimbursable overtime when applicable) for the final inspection, which could take one or two veterinarians six to eight hours to complete. The cost of an inspection for an air shipment from Hawaii ranges from about \$1,000 to \$2,000 a shipment and for a shipment from Miami from about \$200 to \$600.

Compared to the value of the animals being exported, the costs of inspection are minor. Depending upon the breed, one sow or heifer in an air shipment could be worth from \$500 to \$2,000.

This proposed rule is published in the April 26 Federal Register.

To comment on this proposed rule, please send an original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 93-031-1 on or before June 27 to: Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, Program Policy and Development, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141 South Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing to review comments are requested to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the comment reading room.



Release No. 0344.94

Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898

Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959

NEW ZEALAND BRUSHTAIL POSSUMS MAY SPREAD BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS

WASHINGTON, April 26 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is conducting a nationwide investigation to locate all brushtail possums imported from New Zealand because of the high risk these animals may present for spreading bovine tuberculosis to U.S. animal populations.

"The presence of New Zealand brushtail possums in this country is a major threat to the health of domestic animals and wildlife in the United States because these animals are known to be highly infectious carriers of bovine tuberculosis," said Donald Luchsinger, acting deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"We are taking emergency steps to locate all of these imported possums to prevent them from establishing a population here that could become a wildlife reservoir for bovine tuberculosis."

According to export records provided by the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, six shipments of almost 100 brushtail possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) have been imported into the United States since 1991.

A USDA risk assessment conducted earlier this year estimated that there is a very high probability that at least one possum per shipment is infected with bovine tuberculosis. While some of the imported possums have been moving in trade channels to menageries and zoos, it is believed that there is a growing U.S. market for the possums as pet animals.

At the request of USDA veterinarians, New Zealand officials have voluntarily stopped any further shipments of the brushtail possum to the United States. In their country, the possums are a constant source of the disease for their domestic livestock and wildlife populations, posing a major barrier to their bovine tuberculosis control program. Efforts to control the possum population cost the New Zealand government \$7.3 million in 1991.

Because the brushtail possum's cellular immune system is virtually ineffective against the mycobacterium that causes bovine tuberculosis, these animals, once infected with this disease, become a likely source of infection for other animals and humans.

Mycobacterial counts in infected possums are estimated to reach in the billions per gram of diseased tissue. This infection generally concentrates in the possum's lungs, making the potential of aerosol transmission of the disease through respiration a major concern. Living quarters of diseased possums should be considered highly contaminated, as this disease can also be spread through their urine, feces, mucus and sinus drainage.

The onset of bovine tuberculosis in brushtail possums occurs abruptly. Possums with the disease may lose their appetites and appear dazed, becoming less responsive to stimuli. The condition of their fur coats may deteriorate as the disease progresses. Their superficial lymph nodes, located in the lower chest and groin area, become large and swollen, possibly to the degree that they rupture and drain externally. After these signs of sickness appear, infected possums will die of the disease within a few weeks. Other animal species and humans may become infected with the mycobacteria and not show signs of the disease for many months or even years.

Bovine tuberculosis is caused by *Mycobacterium bovis*, which can cause disease in many animal species, including cattle, bison, deer and elk. Although the current resurgence of human tuberculosis is caused by a different bacteria than *M. bovis*, humans can contract bovine tuberculosis through respiration of aerosols expired by infected animals or through consumption of unpasteurized milk.

Anyone currently owning a brushtail possum or who had a possum that died of extended illness should immediately contact their State veterinarian's office or their local APHIS-Veterinary Services office.



Release No. 0345.94

Judy McBride (301) 344-2861

Maria Bynum (202) 720-5192

EXTRA CALCIUM BEFORE AGE 10 MAY HELP STEM OSTEOPOROSIS AFTER 50

WASHINGTON, April 28--Young girls might better guard against osteoporosis later in life by increasing calcium intake several years before they reach age 11, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture findings reported yesterday at the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology annual meeting.

Studies with girls age 5 through 16 show that "most bone forming activity occurs in the years just before and just after the start of puberty," said study leader Steven A. Abrams, a pediatrician. He is based at the Children's Nutrition Research Center in Houston, supported by USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

The first signs of puberty in U.S. girls usually begin between age eight and 11, Abrams noted, the average being around 10. Menstruation begins two to three years later, with age 12.5 being average.

"The current recommendations for increasing calcium intake to 1,200 milligrams in 11- to 24-year-olds may need to be adjusted to start and end at an earlier age," he said.

His results show a rapid drop in bone forming activity within two years after menstruation begins. "By age 15, there was very little bone being formed," he said. "The girls excreted nearly as much calcium as they absorbed." The bones, he explained, contain 99 percent of the body's calcium.

Abrams' research is aimed at ensuring that girls add as much bone as possible during their development, noting that it's well accepted that the higher the peak bone mass, the lower the risk of osteoporosis.

He points out that milk consumption and thus calcium intake among young adolescent girls has dropped alarmingly in recent years--from about 1,400 mg daily in 1950 to 900 mg today. Four 8-ounce glasses of milk provide about 1,200 mg of calcium.

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, half of American women over age 50 and three quarters over age 75 have significant bone loss. In addition to the pain and loss of independence associated with fractures resulting from bone loss, the cost is staggering. The current estimate is between \$10 and \$18 billion annually.

"We're concerned that the percentage of women with osteoporosis may increase if calcium intake continues to remain low," Abrams said. His results show that the girls don't compensate for low intakes by absorbing more from their diets. "If they don't ingest enough, they won't absorb enough."

He used a technique he developed to assess the rate of bone formation with stable (nonradioactive) isotopes of calcium in 50 Caucasian girls, then went on to assess how much calcium their bodies retained. He is continuing the study with 50 African American girls, who have a much lower risk for osteoporosis, to identify any differences in calcium metabolism between the two groups.

"Before these studies, little was known about bone formation in this age group," said Jacqueline Dupont, ARS program director for nutrition research. "Without stable isotope techniques, nutritionists could only estimate when and how fast bone formed in children and adolescents based on their growth rate." And it occurs earlier than the estimates.

Abrams believes "there's no reason to think you can't start to emphasize calcium intake around age 5. The primary prevention of osteoporosis begins before puberty."

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NOTE TO EDITOR: For more information, contact Steven A. Abrams, M.D., Stable Isotopes Laboratory, Children's Nutrition Research Center, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Houston, Tex. 77030. Telephone: (713) 798-7000.

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Release No. 0349.94

Ed Curlett (301) 436-5222

Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959

USDA TO ALLOW IMPORTS OF PLANTS THROUGH PORT EVERGLADES

WASHINGTON, April 29 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced that nursery stock, plants, roots, bulbs, seeds and other plant products will be allowed to enter the country through Port Everglades at Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

While no facilities for inspecting and clearing these restricted articles will be installed at Port Everglades, plant products entering the port will be moved by ground transportation under U.S. Customs bond to Miami for inspection and possible treatment.

"These procedures will continue to assure that imported plants and plant products will not introduce exotic pests or diseases that could adversely affect American agriculture," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

These arrangements were requested by U.S. importers so that plant material arriving on ships at Port Everglades can go to the nearby Miami plant inspection station for inspection and clearance. It is anticipated that most of the plant material will originate from Central and South America.

This final rule is published in the April 26 Federal Register and becomes effective May 26.

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Release No. 0352.94

USDA: Joel Berg (202) 720-6350

DOJ: Joe Krovisky (202) 616-2765

CNS: Mike Berning (202) 606-5000 Ext 266

CHICAGO PROGRAM WINS GRANT TO COMBINE URBAN GREENING AND PUBLIC SAFETY Espy, Reno, Segal Announce Grant for Summer National Service Program

WASHINGTON, April 29--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy, Attorney General Janet Reno and Corporation for National Service CEO Eli Segal announced a grant for a "Summer of Safety" program that will combine urban greening and public safety work in two neighborhoods in Chicago that now suffer from disabling levels of violent crime.

The program, to be run by a non-profit foundation associated with the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences, will engage a socio-economic mix of 50 participants in community service work creating urban gardens, tree planting, renovating playgrounds, and patrolling those areas to create "safe havens" with reduced crime.

Funded by a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service--the new federal corporation administering President Clinton's national service initiative--the program will also receive staff support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Justice.

The participants in the program will earn a small living allowance and a \$1,000 educational award in exchange for their vital service to the community.

One neighborhood site will be the Ida B. Wells Public Housing Development, where the service will be guided by the Chicago Housing Authority and the Ida B. Wells Resident Advisory Council. The other neighborhood site, in which an empty lot will be turned into a community garden, has not yet been named.

Staff from three USDA agencies--Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service--will work with the high school to provide supervision to the participants on a daily basis.

"I am absolutely delighted that USDA will help increase green spaces and gardens in depressed urban areas, boost public safety and advance the President's AmeriCorps initiative that grants educational awards in exchange for significant community service," said Secretary of Agriculture Espy. "National service will fundamentally change the nation because it creates a new civic compact in which any citizen can be tied to the nation by the simple virtue of making a difference in the lives of others."

"The Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences--a model magnet public school that has received national acclaim--will use this program to increase the knowledge of agriculture in urban areas, while building community, promoting personal responsibility, and providing educational opportunity," Espy added.

The Ida B. Wells Development is currently a participant in the Department of Justice's innovative "Weed & Seed" program aimed at cracking down on both criminals and the root causes of crime. This program has already provided the Development with substantial assistance in both law enforcement and crime prevention services ranging from recreational to educational activities.

"The Clinton Administration is dedicated to using every resource possible to fight crime and increase community cohesion. Placing more police on the streets and getting assault weapons out of the hands of criminals must be coupled with innovative new approaches that are needed to deter criminal activities and to give young Americans viable alternatives to crime," said Attorney General Reno.

Continued Reno, "The 'Weed & Seed' strategy, so successful to date at sites like Ida B. Wells, is based on first 'weeding' out criminals from neighborhoods, and then 'seeding' the communities with significant support for neighborhood services. The Chicago Summer of Safety project will take a similar approach by promoting community pride and harnessing the immense energy of young people through activities that rebuild Chicago's neighborhoods."

The Summer of Safety program--which will involve nearly 7,000 participants in 91 projects throughout urban and rural America--was designed by President Clinton and the Corporation for National Service to involve citizens of all ages and backgrounds in safety activities that will bolster local anti-crime and violence-prevention efforts.

"Summer of Safety participants will help the American people take their communities back," said Eli Segal, CEO of the Corporation. "Chicago certainly can benefit greatly from more urban greenery and increased efforts in violence-prevention activities. Yet, instead of just talking about these problems, this Administration will get things done. The Chicago Summer of Safety project will meet critical community needs."



Release No. 0353.94
George Holcomb (202) 720-5746
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

E. H. "WOODY" PATAWA NAMED TO USDA NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAMS POST

WASHINGTON, April 29--Elwood H. "Woody" Patawa has been named director of Native American programs in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

The director has responsibility for involvement of American Indians and Alaska Natives with all USDA agencies and programs.

"Woody Patawa brings years of experience with tribal government which, in turn, will help USDA improve its outreach to American Indians and Alaska Natives," said Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy.

"He also has experience with state governments, having been a member and chairman of the Oregon Commission on Indian Services, and with tribal health, forestry, and gaming management," Espy added.

Born on the Umatilla Indian Reservation in northeastern Oregon near Pendleton, Patawa first began working with the Umatilla tribal government in 1972. He moved through tribal ranks to become chairman and chief executive officer of the Board of Trustees of the reservation's three confederated tribes (Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla) from 1981 to 1993.

As chief executive officer of the three tribes, Patawa oversaw budget and policy activities on the 172,000-acre reservation on behalf of approximately 1,500 enrolled members. He directed development of policies and supervised program managers, chief judges, tribal attorneys and the chief of police. In the health department, he managed contract health, nutrition, alcohol and drug control, social services and budgetary matters.

From 1988 to 1993 he was a member of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, chairing both its strategic planning and organizational development committee and its budget and finance committee.

He once worked on the Blue Mountain National Forest with USDA's Forest Service. He also served as a member of the negotiating team for the Tribal-State Gaming Compact of Oregon.

In 1992 Patawa was presented with a leadership award by the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, and in 1993 was recognized for his participation in the Solid Waste Network of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He was also recognized for outstanding leadership and dedication by the Confederated Tribes' Board of Trustees and General Council.



Release No. 0356.94
Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898
Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959

BRUCELLOSIS ERADICATION PROGRAM TO MOVE FORWARD RAPIDLY IN 1994

WASHINGTON, April 29 -- A USDA official has predicted that several states should make tremendous advances this year in eradicating brucellosis from cattle herds because program efforts already show significant results.

"Program efforts have gained momentum, and many states will pass major milestones toward eradicating brucellosis this year," said Donald Luchsinger, acting deputy administrator of veterinary services for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"The current pace of state program achievements and the high level of commitment to eradication by the cattle industry will soon prove that past critics of the program--who believed that the prevalence of the disease was too high and widespread to ever be eradicated--were wrong," Luchsinger said.

Luchsinger cited the recent advancements of Texas from Class B to Class A status and California from Class A to Class Free status as signs of the success the current eradication strategy will achieve in 1994. Persistent reinfection of cattle herds in certain areas in both states frustrated those working in the program for years. But, cattle producers, state animal health officials and local private-practice veterinarians worked with USDA to develop team approaches to assist problem areas.

The National Cooperative Federal-State Brucellosis Eradication Program uses a classification system to mark progress in eliminating this disease from livestock. States reach Class Free status when no cattle are found to be infected with brucellosis for 12 consecutive months. A Class Free state must also maintain at stockyards, farms, ranches and slaughterhouses a comprehensive testing and surveillance program that demonstrates the annual prevalence rate does not exceed one reactor per 2,000 animals.

At the end of February, the number of herds quarantined for brucellosis was 229. In the 1960's, practically any state with a significant cattle population had more quarantined herds than the country as a whole does now, Luchsinger said.

Luchsinger said he expects several states, in addition to California and Texas, to advance in status this year if rapid progress continues through this summer. Currently, 32 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are Class Free, and 17 states hold Class A status. No states hold the lower Class B or Class C statuses in the country.

Brucellosis, a disease that causes abortions and lowered milk production in cows, is transmissible to humans as undulant fever. In humans, the disease causes severe flu-like symptoms that can last for months or years if left untreated. Humans can become infected with brucellosis through contact with carcasses during slaughter or by handling infected cows, particularly during calving. Humans can also contract brucellosis by consuming unpasteurized milk and dairy products.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Camera-ready copies of "The Final Countdown" map and graph are available upon request from Kendra Pratt at (301) 436-4898.

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Program Announcements-

Release No. 0342.94
Gene Rosera (202) 720-6734

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, April 26--Under Secretary of Agriculture Eugene Moos today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels: 10.12 cents per pound
- medium grain whole kernels: 11.56 cents per pound
- short grain whole kernels: 11.42 cents per pound
- broken kernels: 5.06 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment (LDP) rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are:

	Loan Gain and LDP Rate	Marketing Certificate Rate
\$/Cwt.....	
--for long grain:	\$0.39	\$0.00
--for medium grain:	\$0.00	\$0.00
--for short grain:	\$0.00	\$0.00

The announced prices and rates are effective today at 3:00 P.M. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made May 3, 1994 at 3:00 P.M. EDT.

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**USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE
PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON**

WASHINGTON, April 28 -- Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price or AWP), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (leaf grade 4, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, May 5. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, April 29 through midnight Thursday, May 5.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. Because this week's calculated AWP is equal to 136 percent of the 1993 upland cotton base quality loan rate, a further adjustment cannot be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price	84.83
Adjustments:	
Avg. U.S. spot market location	11.91
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.50
Avg. U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	- 13.72
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	71.11 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	84.83
NE Coarse Count Price	- 82.23
	2.60
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	- 3.20
	- 0.60
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is above 52.35 cents per pound--the base quality loan rate for both the 1992 and 1993 marketing years--the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the loan rate, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is above the 1993-crop loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available during this period.

The USNE price has not exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks, nor have all of the previous four AWP's been less than 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is zero. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	AWP (Announced) As Percent of Loan Rate	USNE Price	NE Price cents/lb	User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate
1	Apr. 7, 1994	130.1	83.08	81.85	0
2	Apr. 14, 1994	132.2	84.90	82.92	0
3	Apr. 21, 1994	136.1	88.50	84.99	0
4	Apr. 28, 1994	135.8	88.10	84.83	0

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, May 5, at 5 p.m.



Release No. 0354.94
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206
Janise Zygmunt (202) 720-6734

USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON 1994 SUPPORT PRICES FOR WOOL AND MOHAIR

WASHINGTON, April 29--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today asked for public comment on the support prices for pulled wool (wool on unshorn lambs) and mohair for the 1994 marketing year.

The National Wool Act of 1954, as amended (the Wool Act), provides that the support price for pulled wool -- the wool removed from the pelts of unshorn, slaughtered sheep -- be set at a level relative to the shorn wool support price that will maintain normal pulled wool marketing practices. This provision has been implemented in the past through payments based on the live weight of unshorn lambs marketed.

The Wool Act also provides that the mohair support price be set at a level to maintain about the same percentage of parity as for shorn wool. Under the Wool Act, the mohair support price may be set at not more than 15 percent above or below the shorn wool parity percentage.

The shorn wool support price is determined by a formula specified in the Wool Act. Based on the current reported parity index, the 1994 shorn wool support price will be \$2.09 per pound, grease basis.

The 2-year phaseout of the wool and mohair programs begins with the 1994 marketing year. Producer payments will be calculated using the support prices covered by this proposed rule, but will then be reduced by 25 percent for 1994 in accordance with Section 704 (9) of the Wool Act. The Wool Act is in effect through December 31, 1995.

The proposed regulation is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on May 2. Comments on the proposed regulation should be sent to: Director, Fibers and Rice Analysis Division, Room 3760-S, USDA/ASCS, PO Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013-2415 and must be received by June 1. A preliminary regulatory impact analysis on the options considered is also available from that office. Public comments will be available for inspection in Room 3756-S of USDA's South Building here during normal business hours.



Media Advisory-

Release No. 0350.94
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623
Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623

USDA SENDS FOOD SAFETY MESSAGE TO CHILDREN AND PARENTS COAST TO COAST

USDA: NO RARE BURGERS

(News events are scheduled in Atlanta, Seattle and New York on Tuesday, May 3.)

WASHINGTON, April 29 -- The United States Department of Agriculture will join parents from coast to coast on Tuesday, May 3, to launch a food handling and cooking education campaign targeted toward children and parents. Announcements will be made in Atlanta, New York and Seattle.

"As we enter the spring and summer season of picnics and cookouts, we want to send a message to children and parents from coast to coast that it is important to make sure that hamburgers are cooked until they are brown in the middle," said Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, who has made improving the meat and poultry inspection system and spreading the word about safe cooking and handling a top priority.

In Atlanta, Acting Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Patricia Jensen will join school children at a picnic to kick off the campaign at 11:30 a.m. ET at Mosley Park at 1625 Martin Luther King Drive.

In New York, parents Bob and Laurie Galler will hold a news conference helping to launch the special campaign at 9 a.m. ET at Manhattan New School, 311 E. 82nd Street (between 1st and 2nd avenues). The Gallers lost their three-year-old daughter Lois Joy Galler, in 1992 after she ate undercooked ground meat tainted with the deadly bacteria E.coli O157:H7. (The Gallers have founded the Lois Joy Galler Foundation for Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome, a nonprofit organization dedicated to finding treatments and a cure for HUS, a deadly disease which can result after exposure to E.coli O157:H7.)

In Seattle, parents Vicki and Darin Detwiler will launch the campaign on the West Coast at 11:30 a.m. PT at North Beach Elementary School, 9018 24th Avenue N.W. (between 89th and 90th). The Detwilers lost their 16-month-old son Riley Detwiler to HUS after he was exposed to E.coli O157:H7 when coming into contact with another child who was exposed to the bacteria.

A video news release with footage from the picnic will be available via satellite. The feed will be made May 3 at 3:30 p.m. till 4 p.m. EDT. The coordinates are: Telestar 302; Transponder 3(V); Channel 3; Downlink Frequency 3760 MHZ; Audio 6.2 and 6.8.



USDA news releases are available by fax the same day they are issued. For information on how to use USDA'S **Ag News F A X** service, use your fax machine's touchtone dialing to call (202) 690-3944. At the voice prompt, press 9 on the phone and then press the start button on your fax machine. Instructions for using the service will be faxed to you.

For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.
